

Memo

To: Indiana County Election Boards
From: Joseph McLain, HAVA Administrator
Date: 7/21/2005
Re: Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) Voting System Reimbursements

According to the information that I have available, your county is one of several counties which still needs to purchase either a new voting system to replace its current punch card voting systems or to purchase accessible voting systems so that each polling location will have at least one voting system that will permit a disabled person to vote on their own, without any assistance from others.

I hope that you will find the enclosed information helpful in making this important decision about which voting equipment to purchase.

Federal law and Indiana law prohibits the use of both lever machines and punch card voting systems by any county, beginning on January 1, 2006. All of the Indiana counties which formerly used the "lever voting machines" have now replaced their lever machines, and although several counties currently using punch cards have not reported experiencing problems with their current systems, the federal and state laws do not provide for any waiver or extension of this requirement for the county to replace its punch card system.

Federal law (the Help America Vote Act of 2002) also requires a voting system which is fully accessible to disabled voters to be available for use in every polling place in Indiana by January 1, 2006. These accessible voting systems must allow disabled voters, such as those who are blind or have other vision impairments to vote in the same way as all the other voters at their polling place: meaning in private and without assistance from anyone else, if they wish.

Unlike many federal mandates, this one came with funding. As a result of this federal funding, counties should be able to meet these new voting system requirements with little or no cost to your county's budget. However, reducing county costs in purchasing voting equipment depends on your ability to ask the right questions to voting equipment vendors and to make the right decision when purchasing new equipment.

I have attached a document that describes some "best practices" that your fellow counties have used to make the HAVA voting machine reimbursement process successful. We trust this information will help you in making these decisions.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (317) 234-8683 or by e-mail at havaadministrator@sos.IN.gov.